

**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY****REGION 8****999 18TH STREET- SUITE 300****DENVER, CO 80202-2466****Phone 800-227-8917****<http://www.epa.gov/region08>**

Jim Mayo
Lincoln County Port Authority
Libby, MT 59923

RE: Former Stimson Central Maintenance Building

Dear Jim:

The Port Authority recently requested a status letter from EPA regarding the former Central Maintenance Building at the Stimson Mill property. Here are the pertinent facts regarding the building:

- In 2002, EPA conducted extensive sampling at the Central Maintenance Building, while Stimson Lumber was still in operation. We released a report on our findings, entitled Draft Asbestos Sampling Report, Stimson Lumber Company, (CDM, December 2002) which is available for review at the EPA Information Center. The sampling revealed that dust in the mobile shop portion of the building was contaminated with significant levels of Libby asbestos, the type of asbestos found in Libby vermiculite. Lower levels of Libby asbestos in dust, concentrations of asbestos below EPA's current action level for cleanup, were found in other areas of the building. We also collected several air samples, both from stationary and personal monitors worn by workers in the building. None of the air samples were above the current OSHA Permissible Exposure Limit of 0.1 fibers per cubic centimeter of air. Most air samples were non-detect.
- Based upon the sample results and visual inspections, EPA determined the Central Maintenance Building would require future cleanup. We notified Stimson of this determination and informed the public. The likely source of the asbestos contamination is vermiculite insulation found in the porous walls of the mobile shop, as well as other vermiculite building materials in the roof of the mobile shop. Past contamination from other sources is also possible.
- Additionally, based upon the dust and air sample results and visual inspections, EPA elected *not* to require Stimson to cease operations at the Central Maintenance Building or restrict short-term use. The levels of asbestos contaminated dust observed in the building, while of concern, were typical of conditions found elsewhere in Libby. Stimson continued to use the building for some time until they ceased operations in 2003.
- After Stimson ceased operations, they conducted their own interior dust cleaning of the mobile shop and other areas within the building. Visible vermiculite was removed from working areas and many areas were HEPA vacuumed or washed down. This cleanup

likely improved conditions in the mobile shop significantly, though we did not sample to verify this. With EPA's knowledge, other tenants have occupied various parts of the building since the Port Authority took ownership of the building.

- In May 2005, EPA commenced cleanup of the Central Maintenance Building. Vermiculite insulation is being removed from walls, the facility's roof is being removed, and interior dust will be cleaned. We expect the cleanup to be complete in several weeks. Until that time, tenants can use the building as necessary, as long as the use is coordinated with the EPA On-Scene Coordinator, Craig Myers. As with all asbestos containing materials, users of the building should exercise basic caution such as avoiding contact with vermiculite insulation. Following cleanup, EPA will provide the Port Authority with a "Cleanup Complete" letter similar to the letter provided to all residences and businesses in Libby that undergo EPA cleanup.

I hope this addresses your concerns. We look forward to working with you in the future and completing the cleanup of the Central Maintenance Building. If you have any questions, please call me directly at (303) 312-6748.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JCE', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jim Christiansen
Remedial Project Manager